

OBJECTIVES



Construction began on the Irvington Masonic Lodge in 1921. Photo taken in 1925. *From the Bass Photo Collection, Indiana Historical Society.*





The Benton House, 312 South Downey Ave., date unknown. Allen Benton served two terms as president of Butler College in the late-nineteenth century. Silence Benton was active in the Disciples of Christ church and wrote devotion literature. Today their home survives as Irvington's best example of the 2nd Empire architectural style. *Collection of Irvington Historical Society.*

OBJECTIVES



BUILDING OBJECTIVES

- To support and encourage the maintenance, preservation and rehabilitation of existing historic structures in a manner that complements and reflects the history and character of Irvington.
- To support and encourage the maintenance, rehabilitation and renovation of non-historic structures in a manner that is compatible with, and does not detract from, the historic character of Irvington.
- To support and encourage new in-fill construction that is compatible with and enhances Irvington's unique historic and architectural character.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES

- To support and encourage neighborhood serving businesses along Washington Street's commercial corridor, especially in commercial buildings.
- To maintain the residential land uses and zoning classifications along Washington Street.
- To maintain the residential land uses and zoning classifications in the areas north and south of Washington Street, with some exceptions noted in this plan for commercial structures adjacent to the Pennsy Trail and the public and semi-public buildings.

NEW DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- To encourage the development of pedestrian-friendly neighborhood businesses, services and environment along Washington Street.
- To encourage the development of pedestrian-friendly, trail-related businesses and services at the intersection of South Audubon Road and Bonna Avenue to support the future Pennsy Trail.
- To reinforce and strengthen the residential core by encouraging appropriate new single-family houses on vacant lots north and south of the Washington Street corridor.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE/AMENITIES OBJECTIVES

- To maintain all elements that represent Irvington's Victorian Romantic landscape design and its pedestrian-oriented, park-like atmosphere, including the winding street pattern, north and south circles, and tree-lined streets.
- To preserve, maintain, and restore Irvington's brick streets, stone curbs and street name tiles.
- To retain Irvington's historic street and alley rights-of-way for public use.
- To improve pedestrian and bicycle amenities throughout the district.
- To encourage and support public art, public transportation and burial of utilities.



The Julian-Clarke House is an outstanding example of the Italianate style. George Julian served as a U.S. Representative and Survey-General of New Mexico under President Grover Cleveland. *Collection of Irvington Historical Society.*

RECOMMENDATIONS



Indianapolis Public School #57, also known as George W. Julian School, was built after the city of Indianapolis annexed Irvington in 1902. Photo taken in 1908. *From the Bass Photo Collection, Indiana Historical Society.*





This English cottage at 822 N. Campbell is a “Stratford” model Sears catalog house. Irvington contains several examples of catalog, or “kit,” houses. *Collection of Irvington Historical Society.*

RECOMMENDATIONS



The purpose of this section is to provide recommendations for future actions that will affect the physical development and the character of the Irvington Historic Area. The recommendations were developed by IHPC staff in consultation with Irvington residents, property and business owners. As with any recommendations, they are meant to guide, not mandate, and are to be used as tools in developing actions and strategies for future decisions.

For the purpose of the Irvington Historic Area Preservation Plan, the recommendations are often divided into three subareas: Washington Street Corridor, Neighborhood Residential, and Pennsy Trail Corridor. The following “Land Use and Zoning Recommendation Subarea Map” illustrates the three subareas.

The boundaries of the subareas were created by IHPC staff and Irvington residents, property, and business owners during the preservation planning process. The boundaries are based on:

- existing building types,
- existing and proposed land uses,
- general character and “feel” of the area, and
- potential for redevelopment and new construction.

The purposes for dividing the Irvington Historic Area into three subareas were:

- to maintain and reinforce the historic residential core,
- to support commercial, retail, and residential uses along Washington Street, and
- to support the revitalization and redevelopment of land adjacent to the future Pennsy Trail.

The designation of a specific site or subarea on the “Land Use and Zoning Recommendation Subarea Map” does not necessarily mean the land is currently zoned for the activity or function. These recommendations serve only as a guide for the direction that new development and redevelopment should take. When requests for certificates of appropriateness, variances and rezoning are considered, the recommendations from this plan can be used to substantiate the desirability and appropriateness of a business or residence for a particular site.

Recommendations Subarea Map

Irvington Historic District



- Historic Area Buildings
- Proposed Pennsy Trail Corridor
- Pennsy Trail Corridor
- Washington Street Corridor
- Neighborhood Residential
- Historic Area Parcels
- Proposed IHPC Boundaries

100 0 100200300 Feet

September 2005

Produced By: The Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission

Data Source: The City of Indianapolis Geographic Information Systems

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LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Encourage and support a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood.
- Encourage a treelined streetscape.
- Strongly discourage the demolition of structures for parking uses.
- Strongly discourage “big box” retailers, drive-thru establishments, surface parking lots, auto-related establishments, and other businesses that emphasize a large amount of parking, outdoor storage, and operation.

SUBAREA A: WASHINGTON STREET CORRIDOR

The Washington Street corridor runs all along Washington St. from the east to the west boundaries of the neighborhood. All along it are found a variety of land uses, including commercial, residential, religious, and educational.

The historic core of the Irvington is that portion of the Washington St. corridor generally bounded by Whittier Place on the west and Bolton Avenue on the east, although several residential buildings are scattered throughout the core. Historically, several groupings of brick commercial buildings fronted Washington Street and housed a variety of businesses, including dry goods and grocery stores, banks, jewelers, and a post office. Over time, many of the historic commercial buildings were demolished and only a few of those structures remain today. Irvington’s commercial buildings generally range in height from 1-3 stories and house a variety of businesses and offices.

Numerous historic houses and apartment buildings also front Washington Street and flank both ends of the commercial core. The majority of these structures were built c.1910 and generally range in height from 2-3 stories.

Most of the land along Washington Street west of Irvington Avenue is zoned D-8 to permit single, two-family, and multi-family housing, which is an appropriate zoning classification for this residential section of Washington Street. However, the majority of the parcels east of Irvington Avenue are zoned C-4, which is an intense and inappropriate zoning classification for the historic area and does not legally permit residential uses.

- Encourage and support the continued use of commercial buildings as neighborhood-serving businesses. Commercial uses are appropriate along specific areas of Washington Street, although the intensity should be limited to neighborhood-based commercial use.
- Single-family, two-family and attached multifamily dwellings are the recommended land use for the houses and apartment buildings on Washington Street.
- Encourage and support the Washington Street Commercial Corridor streetscape project.
- Encourage retail and pedestrian-oriented businesses on the street level.
- Office uses and other such establishments that do not generate a high level of pedestrian

activity are not recommended for the street level. However, such uses are recommended for the upper floors of buildings.

- Identify and encourage areas behind primary structures to be developed, improved, and used for parking.
- Commercial uses should not encroach into the neighborhood residential area and should be strictly limited to Washington Street and a small node around the Pennsy Trail.

SUBAREA B: NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL

The Neighborhood Residential area encompasses the majority of the Irvington Historic District, although it is geographically bisected by Washington Street, a major east-west arterial. The neighborhood residential area primarily consists of single-family dwellings that front narrow, tree-lined streets. The structures range from small, closely-spaced 1-story bungalows to large, widely-spaced 2-story houses that occupy sizeable urban lots. Several public institutions, attached multi-family dwellings, and non-contributing buildings are scattered throughout the residential core area. Most of the area is zoned D-5 to permit single-family and two-family dwellings.

- Single-family and two-family houses are recommended as the dominant land use.
- All existing residential uses should remain residential.
- Strongly discourage the conversion of residential buildings to commercial, retail, or industrial uses.
- Encourage and support the new construction of appropriate single-family or two-family houses on vacant lots to strengthen the neighborhood residential area. New construction should be complementary to surrounding structures in size, scale, height, and setback.
- New development should meet the off-street parking requirements set forth in the zoning ordinance.
- The neighborhood residential area should be low to medium density and no more than 4.5 dwelling units per acre, with special exception provided to historic apartment buildings.
- If the nursing home at 344 South Ritter Avenue and the office building at 110 South Downey Avenue are ever removed, it is strongly recommended that the lots be subdivided and replatted as two or three parcels. New development should be single-family or two-family houses in similar density to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Encourage and support Irvington's many public and/or semi-public institutions (including churches, the Guardian's Home, Bona Thompson Center, Irving Theatre, Irvington Office Center, etc.). However, should the present use of those existing structures ever change, careful consideration should be given to future uses. To minimize the effect on the surrounding residential neighborhood, appropriate new uses should be neighborhood serving and be low-intensity (e.g. community center, performing arts center, art gallery and studio space, educational center, office space, multi-family housing).
- The large commercial complex at 5543 Bonna Avenue is vacant, although it was previously used for industrial and commercial purposes. Industrial uses are not desirable

or appropriate and are too intense of a land use. Some light commercial uses may be appropriate, provided they do not produce an adverse affect on the surrounding residential neighborhood. Recreational, educational, or neighborhood-serving uses may also be appropriate.

- If the large commercial complex at 5543 Bonna Avenue were ever removed, a residential land use is recommended. Residential redevelopment should be consistent with the adjacent land uses and compliment the surrounding neighborhood.

SUBAREA C: PENNSY TRAIL CORRIDOR

Irvington's secondary commercial area exists at the intersection of South Audubon Road and Bonna Avenue. Historically, this intersection was the first commercial area to develop in Irvington, due to its location along the Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1872, a railroad depot was built at the northeast corner of South Audubon Road and Bonna Avenue and shortly thereafter, other neighborhood-serving businesses developed at that intersection, including a pharmacy, grocery store, and doctors' offices.

By the 1920s, a shift occurred in public transportation routes from the railcars on the Pennsylvania line to trolley cars and interurbans along Washington Street. Businesses gradually relocated to Washington Street and, over time, Irvington's first commercial corridor slowly declined. Today, this commercial area is nearly abandoned and only a few historic commercial buildings remain.

In 2002, Indy Parks & Greenways announced the Indianapolis Pennsy Trail project, which will convert the vacated Pennsylvania Railroad corridor into a multi-use recreational trail. Similar trail projects in Indianapolis have stimulated property redevelopment, and therefore redevelopment along the Pennsy Trail is anticipated.

The land along the Pennsy Trail Corridor is zoned C-1 or C-3 to permit commercial use.

- Encourage and support the development of neighborhood serving and trail-friendly businesses at the intersection of Bonna Avenue and South Audubon Road.
- Commercial uses should be strictly limited to the immediate vicinity of Bonna Avenue and South Audubon Road and should not encroach into the neighborhood residential area (Subarea B) in order to preserve the basic structure of the residential neighborhood.
- Strongly discourage the conversion of residential buildings to commercial, retail, or industrial uses.
- Encourage the development of trail access points and trail-related amenities along Bonna Avenue.
- The land east of Good Avenue and south of Bonna Avenue (presently owned by Batts Construction) is mostly vacant and used for commercial purposes. If the land is ever redeveloped, appropriate uses may include a park, a trail-head for the Pennsy Trail, a recreational facility, or new single-family and two-family houses.

ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

The zoning recommendations shown on the Recommended Zoning Map and contained in the text of the Land Use and Zoning Recommendations are to be used only as a guide to determine the most desirable zoning classification for properties within the district. Approval of this plan does not change any zoning in the historic area. Variances and rezonings can only be accomplished through petitioning the Indianapolis Historic Preservation Commission and the Metropolitan Development Commission.

SUBAREA A: WASHINGTON STREET CORRIDOR

- The majority of commercial buildings are currently zoned C-3 and C-4, which are intense and inappropriate zoning classifications for the historic area. It is recommended that commercial structures be rezoned to C-3-C.
- The commercial structures that flank the east-west ends of the district (5102 and 5103; 5933 and 5936 East Washington Street) are zoned C-3 and C-4 respectively. The C-3-C zoning classification is recommended to permit neighborhood-serving businesses and to encourage welcoming “gateways” at the east-west ends of the historic district.
- The D-8 zoning classification is a satisfactory zoning classification for the residential structures fronting Washington Street and is recommended to stay the same.
- Several residential structures along Washington Street are incorrectly zoned for commercial use. Those residential structures should be rezoned to D-8 to legally permit single-family, two-family and attached multifamily dwellings.
- Consider supporting variances for less than the required parking if the current zoning classification requires more parking than is practically needed for a particular business establishment.
- The commercial businesses at 5365 and 5377 East Washington Street are zoned D-8. Because of the neighboring residential structures, the C-2 zoning classification is recommended.
- The George W. Julian School #57 is currently zoned C-4 and D-5. The SU-2 (Special Use School) is recommended.

SUBAREA B: NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTIAL

Overall, the D-5 zoning classification is satisfactory and is recommended to stay the same.

The D-4 zoning classification, which is applied to properties along north Audubon Road, is satisfactory and is recommended to stay the same.

- Granting of variance requests should be carefully reviewed to consider impact on existing parking and/or density issues.
- Encourage the use of buildings for the number of dwelling units for which they were originally designed (i.e. If buildings have been divided into multiple units then they

should be returned to the number of units for which they were originally constructed. With the exception of the historic apartment/condominium buildings, most of Irvington is single and two-family).

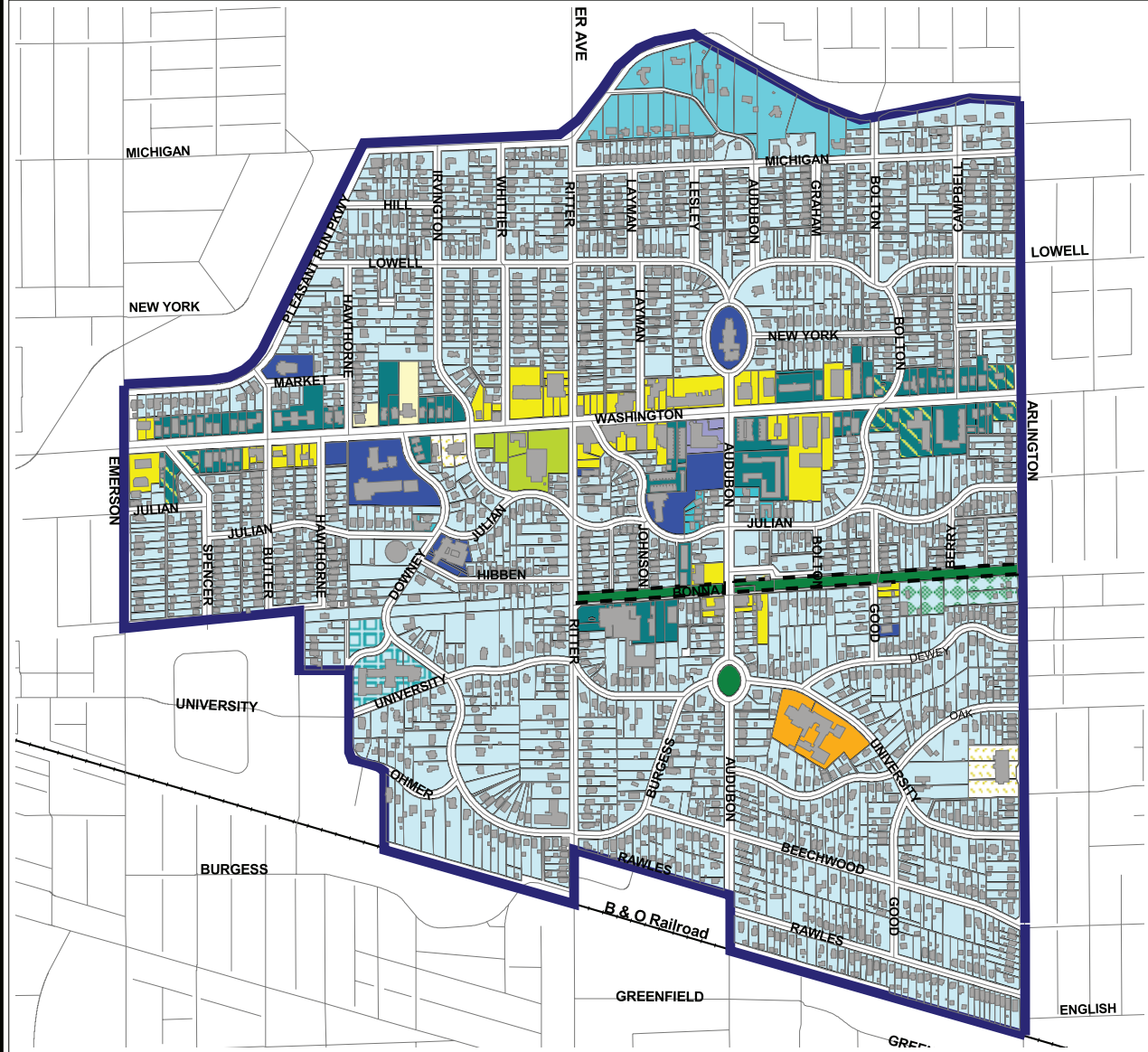
- Several churches, including the Irvington United Methodist Church at 30 N. Audubon Rd.; First Church of Christ Scientist at 5201 Pleasant Run Pkwy, SDR, and the Downey Avenue Christian Church at 111 S. Downey Ave., are currently zoned D-5. The SU-1 (Special Use Religious) zoning classification is recommended.

SUBAREA C: PENNSY TRAIL CORRIDOR

- The commercial buildings immediately adjacent to the future Pennsy Trail corridor are currently zoned C-1 and C-3. The C-3-C zoning classification is recommended to allow for mixed-use, neighborhood serving and trail-friendly businesses.
- The land east of Good Avenue and south of Bonna Avenue is currently zoned C-1 to permit commercial use. If the land is redeveloped as a trail-head for the Pennsy Trail or a park, the PK-1 zoning classification is recommended. The D-5 zoning classifications would also be appropriate to permit residential redevelopment.
- The large commercial complex at 5543 Bonna Avenue is zoned C-3 and C-S to permit commercial uses. If the structure remains, consider rezoning the structure to C-3-C or a less intense zoning classification. Some Special Use classifications may be considered if the proposed use is low-intensity and will not produce an adverse affect on the surrounding residential neighborhood. If the structure is removed, the D-8 zoning classification is recommended.

Recommended Zoning Map

Irvington Historic Area



- Historic Area Buildings
- Proposed Penny Trail Corridor
- Historic Area Parcels
- Proposed IHPC Boundaries
- Recommended Zoning**
- C1 - Office & buffer commercial
- C2 - High intensity office-apartment commercial
- C3C - Corridor commercial
- C3C or D5 - Corridor commercial or single & two-family residential
- C3C or D8 - Corridor commercial or single, two-family and multifamily residential
- D4 - Single-family residential (low-density)
- D5 - Single & two-family residential (medium-density)
- D5 or PK1 - Single & two-family residential or Park Use
- D6 - Multifamily residential (medium density)
- D8 - Single, two-family and multifamily residential (high density)
- DP - Planned Unit Development
- PK1 - Park Use
- SU1 - Special Religious Use
- SU2 - Special School Use
- SU37 - Special Library Use
- SU9 - Special Government Use

100 0 100 200 300 Feet

September 2005

Produced By: Indianapolis
Historic Preservation Commission

Data Source: The City of Indianapolis
Geographic Information Systems

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THOROUGHFARE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Irvington Historic Area is mostly a residential neighborhood that is bisected by Washington Street, a major east-west traffic thoroughfare. The district is bound on the east by Arlington Avenue and on the west by Emerson Avenue, which are classified as primary arterials in the Thoroughfare Plan for Marion County, Indiana. Pleasant Run Parkway South Drive is the district's northern boundary and is a secondary arterial. The majority of the southern boundary is formed by the CSX railroad right-of-way, although the areas of Rawles Terrace and the former Butler University campus are not included.

Most of Irvington's streets are narrow two-lane collector local streets, although on-street parking often restricts traffic to one lane. Like many urban neighborhoods, Irvington's streets receive a moderate amount of traffic. Arlington, Emerson and Washington Streets receive a significant amount of traffic, especially at peak travel times. A traffic count conducted in 1995 indicated that over 23,000 automobiles travel on Washington Street every day.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- No improvements that require additional right-of-way or alter the historic character of the Irvington Historic Area should be made without first investigating alternate improvements that might impact less historically sensitive streets, inside or outside the area.
- If alternative improvements cannot be identified, no improvements should be made that would require additional right-of-way or alter the historic character of the Irvington Historic Area without first evaluating the impact.
- Maintain the location of all streets and alleys.
- Strongly discourage the widening of any street or alley.
- Strongly discourage the vacation of streets and alleys.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

Explore traffic calming measures along Washington Street, with special attention to the schools zones and the commercial corridor, due to the high-level of pedestrian activity.

CRITERIA FOR STREET IMPROVEMENTS:

Whenever any improvements to any part of the Irvington Historic Area street and alley system are considered, the following criteria should be addressed:

- The objective to preserve historic buildings and to preserve them at their original sites.
- The importance of maintaining the integrity of any surviving historic street, alley, and curb surfaces (such as the brick streets, alleys, and stone curbs) and the integrity of the historic street and alley system.
- The need to reinforce the residential core as defined in this plan.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND AMENITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

During the preservation planning process, the history of Irvington's street system was researched by evaluating the following: a c.1872 map of Irvington; 1915 and 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps; and the 1927 Baist's Real Estate Atlas.

The original plat of Irvington deviated from Indianapolis' typical grid layout, and instead included a winding, picturesque street pattern that reflected the ideals of the Romantic landscape design era. Irvington today has more lineal blocks of brick streets than any neighborhood in the county, and its naturalistic plan is considered Indianapolis' largest and most developed example of Victorian Romantic landscape design.

While many of the street names have changed over the years, the overall street pattern has not. The original street pattern, including some of the earliest additions, is almost wholly intact. The unique curvilinear street pattern has experienced very little, if any, change since it was first recorded in November 1870.

When Irvington was first platted, most of Irvington's streets and alleys were paved with gravel or just dirt. By the turn of the century, several streets were macadamized, which is a process of crushing progressively finer layers of gravel into a uniform surface. After Irvington was annexed by the City of Indianapolis in 1902, most of its streets and some alleys were paved with brick. It wasn't until the 1950's that most of Irvington's brick streets were covered with asphalt. Today, four exposed brick streets remain, including Irvington Avenue, Whittier Place, Layman Avenue, and Bonna Avenue, which is more than any other area in Marion County, Indiana. In addition, several streets exhibit historic brick gutters, including Lowell and Johnson Avenues and Whittier Place. Overall, Irvington's brick streets are in good condition, although some areas have large dips and bumps due to frequent vehicular traffic, improper maintenance, and utility repairs.

Several of Irvington's alleys were also brick paved and are evident along Bolton Street and Lowell and Lesley Avenues. However, most alleys were originally dirt or gravel and possibly later macadamized. Today, many of Irvington's alleys are in fair-to-poor condition, due to years of neglect and insufficient maintenance.

Historic limestone and granite curbs are also a significant part of Irvington's historic infrastructure. Overall, the stone curbs are in fair to good condition, and their existence is in part a testament to their durability. Limestone curbs are mostly found along residential streets, while granite curbs were primarily used at corners.

All of Irvington's sidewalks are made of concrete, although when Irvington was first developed many walks were just gravel. Several sidewalk corners contain historic blue and white glazed ceramic street name tiles. Also, some sidewalks contain markers that depict their builder or a product manufacturer.

A spatial depiction of Irvington's historic infrastructure is depicted on the "Historic Infrastructure" map on page 46.

STREETS, ALLEYS AND CURBS:

- Maintain the location of all streets, alleys, sidewalks, and curbs to preserve Irvington's historic street pattern.
- Preserve, maintain and restore Irvington's brick streets, alleys, and stone curbs.
- Strongly encourage the stockpiling of brick pavers and stone curbs so they may be available for repairs in the Irvington neighborhood and other historic areas.
- Use salvaged or replacement brick and/or stone curbs to perform necessary repairs.
- Maintain alley access for pedestrian movement, business and residential loading facilities, and garages with alley access.
- Discourage the vacation the existing streets and alleys.
- Discourage new curb cuts.
- If a street or alley has been vacated, encourage the appearance of a street or alley to maintain the historic streetscape.

SIDEWALKS:

- Maintain the existing sidewalk system.
- Repair and/or replace existing concrete sidewalks that are in poor condition when rehabilitation or redevelopment occurs.
- Finish new concrete walks with hand-tooled joints and a one-directional broom sweep.
- Preserve, maintain and restore the blue and white ceramic street name tiles.

STREET LIGHTS:

Early Irvington plans and drawings referred to the "Washington D.C." standard street lights, which were metal columnar fixtures with acorn globes. A few original street lights exist in the community, primarily around Irving Circle Park and in the Pleasanton area.

- Encourage the installation of new street lights and parking area light fixtures to match or closely resemble the historic "Washington D.C." standard light fixtures.
- Encourage a level and color of light that is compatible with its surroundings.
- Discourage overly bright and harsh lighting, especially in the neighborhood residential area.

STREET TREES:

This section addresses only trees planted in the public right-of-way. Large, mature street trees are more prevalent in the neighborhood residential area. Along major thoroughfares,

such as Arlington and Emerson Avenues and Washington Street, many trees have been removed due to interference with overhead utility lines and obstructing vehicular traffic.

- Avoid street trees that interfere with traffic or inhibit pedestrian movement.
- Plant street trees in pits with metal grates that are flush with the pavement when in sidewalks. Grates should be a minimum of 18.5 square feet in area.
- Avoid tree species that branch out less than seven feet above the pavement.
- Consult the list of recommended street trees in the Appendix before starting a tree planting project. Also, the Department of Parks & Recreation can supply a list of recommended trees.
- Obtain a Flora Permit through the Department of Parks & Recreation (Indy Parks) Forestry Section prior to planting, pruning or removing trees in the public right-of-way.

STREET FURNITURE:

This section addresses only street furniture placed in the public right-of-way. Street furniture includes such items as benches, bus shelters, trash receptacles, fountains, and bollards. At the time of publication, there is a minimal amount of street furniture in the Irvington Historic Area. Existing street furniture is primarily found along the Washington Street commercial corridor.

- Locate street furniture outside of pedestrian pathways.
- Place street furniture close to places where pedestrians gather, such as intersections and building entrances.
- Choose street furniture that possesses a simple design and is compatible in color and material to its surroundings.

OTHER AMENITIES:

- Encourage public art.
- Encourage burying utility lines.